FIRST INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON ARMENIAN LINGUISTICS: PROCEEDINGS

THE UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA
PHILADELPHIA
11-14, JULY 1979
SPONSORED BY
THE SOCIETY FOR ARMENIAN STUDIES

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CARAVAN BOOKS
DELMAR, NEW YORK
1980

The First International Conference on Armenian Linguistics
was sponsored by the Society for Armenian Studies and
received subvention assistance from
The International Research and Exchanges Board, New York
The AGBU Alex Manoogian Cultural Fund, Detroit
The Office of the Provost, The University of Pennsylvania
The Office of the Dean, College of Arts and Sciences,
Cleveland State University

Published by
Caravan Books, Delmar, New York 12054

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Printed in the United States of America

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data

International Conference on Armenian Linguistics, 1st,
University of Pennsylvania, 1979.
First International Conference on Armenian Linguistics.

"Held at the University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, 11-14 July 1979."
Includes bibliographies.
1. Armenian language–Congresses. I. Greppin, John A. C.
PK8001.15 1979 491'.992 80-24203
ISBN 0-88206-044-9

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SYNTACTICAL PECULIARITIES IN THE TRANSLATIONS OF THE HELLENIZING SCHOOL

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The predominantly philosophical translations of the Hellenizing School are characterized by syntactical awkwardness that makes them somewhat incomprehensible. The ambiguities are basically due to the fact that these translations maintain not only the word order of the Greek but also the form of Greek compounds and other grammatical structures.

Unlike biblical and other religious translations of the Golden Age (5th century), the predominantly philosophical translations of the Hellenizing School (flourished *ca.* 570 - *ca.* 730)[1] maintain the Greek word order or syntax.[2] The interlinear character of these translations is well explained by LEWY (1936, 15-16), who observes that these translations were intended primarily for the *trivium* -- the three subjects taught in the schools of the late classical period as preliminary to biblical and theological studies: grammar in accordance with Dionysius Thrax, rhetoric, and introduction to dialectic. LEWY goes on to follow AKINIAN (1932, 285) in suggesting that these translations were to facilitate the education of Armenian students seeking admission into the Byzantine schools in the imperial metropolis, where also the Hellenizing School must

have been located. Such a thesis can be further substantiated not just by appealing to the historical situation during the last quarter of the 6th century -- as both of the cited authorities do -- but also by the fact that the Armenian translations of voluminous writers like Plato, Aristotle, and Philo are incomplete. No attempt was made by the Hellenizing School to translate the complete works of such celebrities but only select works which seem to have been used for tutorial purposes.

Following MANANDIAN's pioneering work (1928), the achievements of this School are arranged into four groups representing four successive periods of active translating. The grouping is based primarily on the rendering of Greek compounds in the Armenian. Whereas in the earliest translations many Greek compounds are rendered by a number of words, in the later translations a more mechanical imitation of Greek compounds becomes commonplace. In the latest translations of the School a considerable number of the new compounds stand out as *hapax-legomena*. The line of demarcation between the groups, however, is not as clear as MANANDIAN indicates. For instance, much of what he says about the second group of translations applies equally to the translation of Philo's works which he places in the first group. The distinction between the groups seems to rest more on the relative frequency of compounds rendered in one word and compounds rendered in more than one word than on the rarity or uniqueness of some compounds rendered in a word.[3]

In view of the significance of compounds in the translations of the School, we shall look at their formation. Indeed, there can be no thorough treatment of syntax without considering the employment of stems and words in the composition of compounds; one may even begin with the various inflectional forms of simple words. For practical purposes, we shall limit our consideration to renderings of Greek compounds beginning with prepositional prefixes. Some examples of such renderings, taken from every *categorema* of prepositionally prefixed words, will suffice.

<u>ἀνά - վեր</u>

ἀναλογία	վերաբանութիւն
ἀναγιγνώσκω	վերծանեմ
ἀνατίθημι	վերամբարձ դնեմ

<u>ἀντί - դեր / դէմ / փոխ</u>

ἀντεφόρμησις	դիմադարձութիւն
ἀντιμεθίστημι	հակառակ փոփոխութիւն ընդունեմ
ἀντωνομία	դերանունութիւն

<u>ἀπό - ապ / բաց</u>

ἀπόκροτος	ապալերկ
ἀπολογία	ապաբանութիւն
ἀφηνιασμός	ապարասանութեան լծնկեց լինելն
ἀπεργάζομαι	բացագործեմ
ἀπογίγνομαι	բացալինիմ
ἀπολαμβάνω	առնեմ ի բաց
ἀποτέλεσμα	բացակատարուած
ἀποτελέω	բացակատարեմ
ἀπόφασις	բացասութիւն

<u>διά - տրա</u>

διαιρέω	տրամատեմ
διατριβή	տրամանցանակ բանք
διαφορά	տրամաբերութիւն

<u>εἰς - ներ</u>

εἰσάγω	ի ներքս մուծանեմ
εἰσαγωγή	ներածութիւն
εἰσρέω	ի ներքս հոսեմ

<u>ἐκ - արտ</u>

ἐκβλάστημα	արտաբոյս
ἔκθεσμος	արտօրէն անառակութիւն
ἔκφυλος	արտատոհմ

<u>ἐν - ներ</u>

ἐγκύκλιος	ներշրջանական
ἐγκώμιον	ներբողեան
ἔμφασις	ներերեւոյթ
ἐμφέρω	ներկրեմ
ἔμψυχος	ներշնչական
ἐναρμόνιος	ներյարմարագոյն

<u>ἐπί - մակ / վեր</u>

ἐπιδακρύω	արտօսր ի վերայ թորեցուցանեմ
ἐπιδιαίρεσις	մակատրամատութիւն
ἐπίνοια	մակամտացութիւն
ἐπιστήμη	մակացութիւն
ἐπίτασις	մակասութիւն
ἐπίτριτος	մակեռորդ, վերեռակ

<u>κατά - բստ / ստոր</u>

καταγιγνώσκω	բստգտանեմ
καταγιγνώσκω	բստգտեալ կշտամբեմ
καταμέμφομαι	բստգիւտ պախարեմ
κατάδυσις	ստորասոյզ
κατάφασις	ստորասութիւն
κατηγορία	ստորոգութիւն

μετά - փոխ

μεταμορφόω	փոխել կերպարանեմ
μετανίστημι	անել փոխեմ զբնակութիւն
μεταστοιχειόω	փոփոխեմ զտարերս

παραδίδωμι	յարատրեմ
παρέλκω	յարաքարշեմ
παροξύτονος	յարաշեշտլոր

περιαθρέω	պարատեսանեմ
περιγραφή	պարագրութիւն
περιποιέω	պար առնեմ

πρός - առ / յար

προσηγορία	առնուութիւն
προσκρίνω	առդատեմ
προσλαμβάνω	առընդունիմ

σύν - բաղ / փաղ / շաղ / շար

συλλογιστικός	բաղբանական
συμπέρασμα	բաղեզերումն
σύνταξις	բաղդասութիւն, շարա-

σύλληψις	շաղառակ
συμπλέκω	շաղապատեմ
συμπλοκή	շաղամասնութիւն, շարա-

ὑπέρ - առաւել / գեր

ὑπερβάλλω	առաւելել զանցուցանեմ քան
ὑπερθετικός	գերադրական
ὑπερτίθημι	առաւելազանցեմ

παρά - առ / յար

παραβάλλω	առարկել նմանեցուցանեմ
παραλαμβάνω	առնեմ ընդ ինձ
παροιμία	առակեցելումն

περί - բակ / պար / մօտ

περιίστημι	բակառեմ
περικάθημαι	մօտ անցել նստիմ
περιτίθημι	բակ արկանեմ

πρό - նախ

πρόναος	նախատաճար
προδίμιον	նախակրթակ
πρωτοτόκια	նախնեացն պտուղք

προσάπτω	յարեմ եւ ընդհարկանեմ
προσῆκον	յարժանաւորութիւն
προσκολλάω	յարել մածանիմ

συλλαβή	փաղառութիւն
συνώνυμος	փաղանուն
συνωνύμως	փաղանունաբար

συλλογίζομαι	շարաբանութիւն
συμφωνία	շարաձայնութիւն միաբանութեան
συνέχεια	շարունակութիւն յաճախութեան

ὑπό - ստոր

ὑπόθεσις	ստորադրութիւն
ὑποκείμενος	ստորակայ
ὑποπίπτω	ստորանկանեմ

The formation of Armenian compounds in the above examples requires little or no explanation: the imitation of Greek compounds is all too obvious. Of course, a word in one language is seldom the exact equivalent of a word in a different language. Each word is the center of a whole cluster of meanings and associations, and in different languages these clusters often overlap but do not always coincide. However, some of these artificial compounds are meaningless -- in spite of the inherent meanings of the parts of which they are composed. The same is true of the broader syntax of these translations in spite of the inherent meanings of words which, to the Armenian reader, seem in disarray. Even when the meanings of the individual words are known, the overall meaning remains elusive.

In his study of the Philonic works extant in both Greek and Armenian, MARCUS (1953, 251-252) observes three classes of word renderings by the Armenian translator: (1) one to one correspondences, (2) exact reproductions of compounds, and (3) one word translating a number of Greek synonyms or words of related but by no means identical meaning. MARCUS, however, disregards three other classes of word renderings that emerge from lack of exact equivalency or import of meaning in the Armenian. In such instances the translator was compelled to render a Greek word with a number of words. Moreover, there are many instances where after once rendering a Greek word by its Armenian equivalent, the translator elsewhere renders the same word by a number of words, often using *hendiadys* and sometimes *polysyndeton*. Furthermore, one finds not only exact reproductions of compounds but also renditions of the same compounds in separate words. One may even go beyond these major classes of word renderings to show a fair number of other, still common tendencies of rendering. The following randomly taken examples from Philo, scores of which abound in any Philonic work extant in both languages, will suffice to show a number of these additional classes of word renderings and the translator's treatment of words in general.[4]

αἰσχρός	Leg All I	*ամաւթալի* (61)
	Leg All II	*ամաւթալի* (32, 66)
		ամաւթանք (68, 70)
	Abr	*ինչ համարեալ է ամաւթ* (106)
	Dec	*ամաւթալի* (93, 115, 123)
		զարշելի (115)
	Spec Leg III	*ամաւթալի գործ* (24)
		ամաւթալի եւ անասուն (49)
		ամաւթ (51)
ἀκριβόω	Leg All I	*ստուգել եւ ճշգրտել ինչ կարեմ* (91)
	Abr	*ճշմարտեալ ստուգեմ* (2)
		ստուգեմ եւ ճշգրտեմ (167)
		ստուգեմ ճշմարտապէս (240)
	Dec	*ճշգրտեմ* (1, 18, 48)
		ստուգեմ (82)
	Spec Leg I	*ճշգրտագոյն ասեմ* (105)
		հաւաստի զեկուցանեմ (110)
	Vita Cont	*ստուգեալ ասեմ* (14)
		ճշգրիտ ստուգութեամբ կազմեմ ձեռագործ (49)
		կազմեմ (51)
ἀπόδοσις	Leg All I	*բացատրութիւն* (16)
		հատուցումն (99)
	Leg All II	*պատճառք* (14)
	Abr	*բացատրութիւն հատուցման* (88, 147)
		բացատրութեան հատուցումն (119)
		ենթադրութիւն (200)
ἀφθονία	Leg All I	*առատութիւն անչարակնութեան* (54)
	Abr	*առատութիւնք բերոցն* (134)
		առատութիւն մեծութեան (208)
	Dec	*առատութիւն եւ առաւելութիւն* (16)
		առատութիւն (17)
		աննախանձ առատութիւն (117)
	Spec Leg I	*բազմաշահութիւն* (141)

κιβδηλεύω	Leg All II	*խոտեմ եւ անգոսնեմ* (57)
	Dec	*Նշաւակ խարդախութեամբ աղարտեմ* (3)
	Spec Leg I	*խոտեմ եւ անարգեմ* (326)
	Spec Leg III	*խանգարեմ* (11)
	Vita Cont	*խոտան եւ արհամարհ եւ անարգ գործ գործեմ* (42)
κρατέω	Leg All I	*իշխեմ եւ տիրեմ եւ զաւրանամ* (73)
		ունիմ եւ ըմբռնեմ միշտ (100)
		բուռն հարեմ եւ հարստահարեմ (106)
		իշխեմ եւ հարստահարեմ (106)
	Leg All II	*ըմբռնեմ եւ տիրանամ* (29)
		ըմբռնեմ եւ տիրեմ (70)
		ըմբռնեալ իշխեմ (70)
	Abr	*իշխեմ* (121)
		հասեալ կամ (151)
		հասեալ ըմբռնեմ (182)
		ունիմ եւ իշխեմ (220)
		բուռն հարեալ ունիմ զիշխանութիւն (243)
	Spec Leg I	*յաղթեմ* (312)
		ըմբռնեմ (343)
	Vita Cont	*ըմբռնեմ* (2)
συνέχω	Abr	*միաբան եւ ամբողջ եւ ի միասին պահեմ* (74)
	Spec Leg I	*ամբողջ պահեմ* (289)
	Vita Cont	*ըմբռնեմ ի միաբանութիւն* (63)
συνόλως	Leg All I	*միանգամայն* (31)
	Leg All II	*բնաւ իսկ ամենեւին* (19, 71)
		բնաւ ամենեւին (46)
	Abr	*միանգամայն* (102, 141, 267)
	Dec	*միանգամայն եւ առ հասարակ* (21)
		առ հասարակ միանգամայն (51)
		միանգամայն (156, 171)
	Spec Leg I	*միանգամայն* (100)

No doubt the Armenian translator of Philo made inconsistent use of a lexicon, for seldom does his choice of words fall outside a lexical pattern or appear to have been based on recall.[5] Certainly his choice of words was not always governed by context. He randomly chose words from among the alternate meanings provided in his manual. Sometimes he picked two or three synonyms which he used either conjunctively or paraphrastically. When picking two verbs, he often changed the first into a participle (but no methodical rendering of participles is to be found in his translation--even if one were to allow for the confusion resulting from the scribal tendency in the Middle Ages toward abbreviating the participial ending *-եալ* to *-ել*, the infinitival ending). His frequent use of auxiliary verbs is all too obvious. But seldom does his "paraphrasing" --even of compounds--obliterate the lexical terms, which can be identified. Identifying the Greek lexical terms, however, could be difficult, since one Armenian word sometimes translates a number of Greek synonyms or words of related but by no means identical meaning; e.g., *ամաւթ*, an equivalent of αἰσχρός, the first word listed above, could also be a rendering of αἰδοῖον (Spec Leg I 83), and *միանգամայն*, an equivalent of συνόλως, the last word listed above, could also be a rendering of ἀθρόος (Abr 42, 138), ἅμα (176), καθάπαξ (36, 50), ὁμοῦ (45, 50, 136, 161, 246, 267), συλλήβδην (49), and ὅλως (Leg All I 31).

Other syntactical peculiarities are easily discernible in these translations; e.g., the placing of the verb after the subject instead of before--as is customarily done in Classical Armenian; thus, one reads

անասուն կենդանիքդ բանի բաժին ունին

instead of the more familiar

բանի բաժին ունին անասուն կենդանիքդ

The former is a literal rendering of

τὰ ἄλογα ζῶα λόγου μετέχουσι

Another peculiarity is seen in the placing of the attribu-

tive before the substantive instead of after; thus, one reads

զերիկեան բանսն instead of *զբանսն երիկեան*

The former is a literal rendering of

τοὺς ἐχθὲς λόγους

Note the attachment of the accusative prefix to a word with a genitive suffix, an awkwardness resulting from the reversed position of the attributive. Other examples:

զբանիցն խրախճանութիւն instead of *զխրախճանութիւն բանիցն*
զայլոցն լուրս instead of *զլուրս այլոցն*
զկանանց տկարութիւն instead of *զտկարութիւն կանանց*

The foregoing syntactical peculiarities may be seen in the following example:

զհանճարոյ բանս իմանալ (Hellenizing School)
իմանալ զբանս հանճարոյ (Golden Age)

Awareness of the Greek syntax underlying the translations of the Hellenizing School faded away in subsequent centuries.[6] What most impressed the Armenian scholiasts of the late Middle Ages was the obscurity of the language and the challenge to convey its meaning. They accepted this as being the fault of the readers, not of the authors or the translators. For the scholiasts Plato, Aristotles, Philo, Irenaeus, David the Invincible, and others should be tackled only by men of profound ability. While the would-be-interpreters were apt to quote these authors more than interpret them, some were eager to express their personal views rather than those of the authors; others, however, were content with short catenae of quotations. As for medieval and later scribes, they must have copied the seemingly obscure translations of the Hellenizing School with little or no understanding.

NOTES

[1]For a complete list of these translations, see AREVŠATYAN, 1971, 16-18; on the date of the founding of the School, see the excellent discussion by LEWY, 1936, 9-16, who, for the most part follows AKINIAN, 1932, 273-277.

[2]This was readily observed by AUCHER, 1822, ii. It was due to his collaboration that the translations of the Hellenizing School were drawn upon in the monumental dictionary edited by AWEDIK'IAN, SIWRMELIAN, and AUCHER himself (AWGERIAN), 1836-1837.

[3]Preferences by various yet few translators and their obvious use of a lexicon may account for much of the similarities and dissimilarities between the groups.

[4]Similar examples may be taken from REYNDERS, 1954; cf. CONYBEARE, 1895, 1911.

[5]Another clear evidence for the use of a lexicon by the translator(s) is found in the parallel passages from Plato's *Timaeus* and David's *Prolegomena* cited by AREVŠATYAN, 1971, 15. It is not that the translator of David used the Armenian version of the *Timaeus*, as AREVŠATYAN thinks, but that the translator(s) of these works used the same lexicon. This accounts for the minor variations in the translations.

[6]Gregory Magistros (11th century) may belong to the last generation of those who were aware of the underlying Greek syntax.

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